742. Book Review - "Things that are Caesars" - Means.

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"Things That Are Caesars" - Paul B. Means.

In the religious world today the situation in Germany holds a place of commanding significance. The issues at stake within German Protestantism itself, and between German Protestantism and the German State are vital to religion everywhere. The most dramatic feature is the heroic struggle in which the Church is waging to maintain its independence against a state one of whose fundamental theories is that of complete control of all elements within the state. The Church is the only institution in Germany today that is, in any large & effective way, combatting Nazi absolutisms. But they are important elements in the sit-

Protestant Church has long been characterized by certain attitudes of life and thought that have on the one hand alienated it from large groups of the people, and on the other hand have contributed to the super-nationalism of a totalitarian state. I do not intend to quote much from the book reviewed, but a few sentences might help us to get the author's position.

"A religious institution" he says, "sows the seeds of its own destruction when it becomes so wrapped up in its own forms and doctrines of worship that it becomes insulated from the real social needs of the people which it is to serve. - - - - - - - - - - - -

"The National Socialist revolution in the church was a tragic witness of the failure of the church to adapt its message to modern life and to play a role in the nation vital and significant enough to chal-

lenge the claims of conflicting loyalties. The church was not able to offer more effective resistance to the inroads of pagan religious movements because its own life and message had become corrupted and complacent."

Now, who is Paul Banwell Means, author of this book, "Things That Are Caesar's"? Paul Means was born in Orleans, Nebraska, in 1894, so he is now 47 years old. He was graduated from Yale University in 1915. As a Rhodes Scholar he went to Oxford University and received his baccalaureate degree in Literature. He later received his Doctorate in Philosophy from Columbia. During the World War he served in the Y.M.C.A. with the British Army in Mesopotamia and India. He was on the Philosophy faculty of Berea College, Ky. and was Assistant

Professor of Psychology at Aberdein College. He began his studies of The Church in Germany before Hitler came to power. The studies presented in this book were carried on during residence in Germany.

In presenting the various factors which are evident in the German Protestant situation today I am not following the exact order of the author, but I am endeavoring to present as faithfully & fully as the time will permit the most essential elements of his data & his argument.

Let us first get before us as a fundamental background the old Protestantism, deeply rooted in the scriptures as interpreted by Martin Luther, resting upon 400 years of Lutheran history. Traditional Lutheranism, with its concern for the inner life & salvation of the individual soul has imbedded itself in the mind & heart & life of the German people.

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concern for the inner life & salvation of the individual has ~~deeply~~ influenced greatly in the mind & heart & life of the German people. But during these 400 years Lutheranism in Germany has been, in the main, static. Its concern has been almost wholly with the inner spiritual life of its people, and it has given practically no thot or effort to mold & transform society in accordance with the ideals. Indeed, it has been suspicious of any movement within the church which sought to realize the Kingdom of God upon earth. ~~Even the Kingdom of God is in heaven.~~ And any movement which sought to break down the social stratification by elevating the less privileged classes has been looked upon with suspicion. Patient submission to this ~~divine appointment~~ lot was taught as a supreme virtue of the lower classes. It was only

in heaven that men would be judged according to their real worth. Luther's preference for a monarchial form of government, & his depreciation of the political worth of the common people have tended to make the old church an unconscious tool of political absolutism.

Another tradition operative in German Protestant life A second has been Pietism, founded by Spener in the latter part of the 17th century. Pietism arose as a protest & reaction against the empty formalism of the state-church. It minimized the value of church rituals and ordinances, & magnified the ideal of a holy life based upon a study of the Bible. Its vision, however, was limited almost exclusively to the individual & it failed to develop any large social program. Unfortunately, too, in Germany it began and continued as a movement among the aristocratic classes, & failed to reach

masses of the German people.

2. With this fundamental background in our minds — a faith deeply imbedded in the hearts & minds + lives of the people, but essentially static, individualistic, + humanistic — the author produces to consider some of the factors which have been boring in to this traditional Protestantism.

II. First, there is Socialism in its various forms. The industrial revolution struck Germany + Central Europe with peculiar violence. Quiet mediaeval towns found themselves suddenly transformed into great industrial centers. Cities with large factories grew rapidly, + like powerful suction pumps, drew peasants + working classes

away from the simple conditions of the farms + villages into their own complex life. The condition of these workers was far from idealistic. They labored long hours at machines, + lived cramped, monotonous lives in dark streets + dreary alleys. Their physical + economic distress cried aloud for relief. But the first to hear the cry, + sense the need, + protest the deplorable conditions was not the church. The first protests + the earliest efforts at correction came from other sources; and then + then, according to Dr. Means, began the alienation of the proletariat from the church.

2. Marxian socialism dates back to about

the middle of the nineteenth century. The Communist Manifesto was published in 1848. The antagonistic attitude of Marxian socialism toward religion is too well known to need recounting here. Neither is it necessary to review the principles of the Marxian movement.

3. The Social Democratic Party has, since 1890, been more willing to consider the claims of religion than has the communist party. The official policy of the Social Democratic party was expressed in 1891 as follows: "Religion is regarded as a private matter, each individual being free to accept or reject it as he will." As a matter of practice, however, after 1900,

especially after the World War, a demand was made for a church withdrawal from the churches, & a plea for the rejection of all church members. Only non-church members enjoyed sufficient confidence of the party to be candidates for the Reichstag.

In later years, after the Social Democrats took over the government, in 1918, they found it necessary to secure every possible ally, & their attitude toward religion & the church became more friendly. By 1930 the church was no longer condemning socialism as positively un-Christian; and some of the younger clergy, ordained after the war, were quite socialistically & democratically inclined. A large part of the clergy, however, continued to look upon socialism as an enemy.